

PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG
EMPLOYEES AT THE MANAGERIAL AND SUPERVISORY
LEVEL



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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini telah meneroka persepsi terhadap gangguan seksual di kalangan pekerja di peringkat pengurusan dan penyeliaan. Beberapa faktor terpilih telah diuji untuk mengenalpasti perkaitan dan pengaruh di antara pembolehubah bersandar, iaitu persepsi terhadap gangguan seksual. Hasil kajian telah mengesahkan bahawa terdapat perkaitan positif di antara pendedahan maklumat mengenai gangguan seksual dengan persepsi. Pembolehubah demografi seperti agama, syarikat, jawatan dan tahap pendidikan turut dikenalpasti mempengaruhi persepsi terhadap gangguan seksual. Responden wanita lebih cenderung menganggap tingkahlaku sosio seksual sebagai gangguan seksual berbanding responden lelaki. Untuk dimensi gangguan seksual, responden wanita lebih cenderung menganggap dimensi fizikal sebagai gangguan seksual, manakala responden lelaki pula menganggap dimensi visual sebagai gangguan seksual. Kajian turut mendapati bahawa responden dipengaruhi oleh jenis penganggu apabila melabel gangguan seksual. Responden kajian ini turut memperlihatkan strategi reaksi terhadap gangguan seksual yang positif.

Implikasi kajian ini akan memberi maklumbalas kepada pengamal-pengamal Pengurusan Sumber Manusia agar dapat mempertingkatkan kesedaran pekerja terhadap isu gangguan seksual dan kewujudan Kod Amalan Untuk Mencegah dan Membasmi gangguan seksual di tempat kerja. Adalah penting untuk para majikan untuk memberi pendedahan mengenai gangguan seksual dan pada masa yang sama memastikan wujudnya polisi yang jelas dan prosedur kilanan untuk menangani gangguan seksual di tempat kerja.

ABSTRACT

The research has explored the perception of sexual harassment among the employees at managerial and supervisory level and provided an understanding of the phenomena. Selected factors have been examined to further explore on the relationship and influence to the dependent variable, which is perception of sexual harassment. This study has confirmed that there is a positive relationship between exposures to sexual harassment information to perception of sexual harassment. Demographic variables such as religion, company, position and education influenced the perception of sexual harassment. Female respondents have higher inclination to perceive more socio sexual act or behavior as sexual harassment as compared to the male respondents. On the sexual harassment dimension, female respondents perceive physical dimension more than other dimension of sexual harassment. Conversely, male respondents perceive visual dimension more than other sexual harassment dimension. The study also found that respondents were inclined to label sexual harassment based on type of harasser. The respondents also indicated a positive coping strategy concerning sexual harassment.

The implication of the study is that Human Resource Practitioners could further enhance the awareness of the sexual harassment and the existence of The Code of Practice on Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment at the workplace. There is a crucial need for employers to educate their employees on sexual harassment and at same time establish clear policy and grievance procedure concerning sexual harassment at the workplace.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Sexual harassment is a serious social issue in many industrialized nations such as the United States and Europe where women have entered the workforce in droves. Surveys carried out in a number of industrialized nations show that the proportion of female employees who have experienced sexual harassment in those countries ranged from forty-two (42) to seventy (70) percent (an excerpt from the keynote address of Yang Berhormat Dato' Lim Ah Lek, the then Malaysian Minister of Human Resources at the official opening of the National Workshop on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace on 1st March, 1999 in Kuala Lumpur).

The earliest reported case of sexual harassment occurred in Malaysia in the 1950s when a group of women estate workers in Klang and Sitiawan went on strike in protest of being sexually harassed (Wani Muthiah, 2001). Cases on sexual harassment have been reported in the local media from 1996 until to date. One of these cases involved a General Manager with Copthorne Orchid Penang Hotel who harassed his female employee in the hotel kitchen by a sudden lifting of her right leg that caused her cheongsam uniform to part in the presence of other workers (Dielenberg & Chen, 2000). Another case in point is that of a civil servant in Negri Sembilan who claimed that her two co-workers who were officers at the Jempol District Office had sexually harassed her (The Star, 17 April 2001). These cases prove that incidences of sexual harassment occur in varied working environments without being discriminative of the sexually harassed employee's position in an organization. The landmark case in Malaysia pertaining to sexual harassment that formed the basis for a claim of

constructive dismissal had been heard at the Industrial Court. The court decided in favor of the complainant, Lilian Theresa De Costa as against her employer Jennico Associates. Subsequently, the High Court quashed the decision of the Industrial Court and the case is now pending appeal against the former court's decision (Wani Muthiah, 2001). Based on the latest statistics, 455 sexual harassment cases, which included the outraging of modesty, showing of genitals, uttering vulgar words and gestures were reported in Penang over the past three years (Sebastian, J., Suthakar, K., Choong, K.K., Tunku, S., Vinesh, D & Chen, H.O., 2001). Out of the 455 cases, only 107 arrests were made for outraging of modesty cases. The upward trend in Penang alone could be alarming since more cases goes unreported due to embarrassment or fear of retaliation from the harasser.

The Ministry of Human Resource on August 17, 1999 introduced the "Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" (hereinafter referred to as the code). Its objective was to arrest and eliminate the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. The adoption of the code was not made compulsory. Since the code's inception, the Human Resource Ministry has confirmed that only one (1) percent of the total number of registered employers in the nation have adopted the code (Wani Muthiah, 2001). Given the low adoption rate of the code, the purpose of this research is to discover the applicability of the code to workers in the upper level of management in the private sector and how human resource practitioners can manage their workforce in line with the spirit and letter of the code.

The need for this research is further strengthened by the fact that local studies have focused on the perception of sexual harassment from among government public administrators and female production operators. To our knowledge, there is no such

study focusing on the management group of the private sector. It is important to discover their perception of sexual harassment in order to form an absolute and comprehensive idea of whether they perceive the acts or behaviours as suggested in the code as harassment in the Malaysian context.

1.2 Problem Statement, Research Questions and Objectives of Study

The code has categorized several suggested acts or behaviours that could amount to sexual harassment into five forms. These five forms can fall into either the category of sexual coercion or sexual annoyance. However, before the suggested acts or behaviours can even be labeled as a form of sexual harassment they must be perceived as such by the recipient on reasonable grounds. As such, perception is still the main ingredient in determining whether the suggested acts or behaviours; or any other acts or behaviours not suggested in the code are a form of sexual harassment. Therefore, in the light of the existing code the questions formulated for the purpose of this research are as follows:

1. What is the extent to which the acts or behaviours as suggested in the code are perceived as a form of sexual harassment by employees?
2. What are the factors that influence the employees' perception of the acts or behaviours as suggested in the code as a form of sexual harassment?
3. Does the type of harasser or gender of harasser influence employees' perception of the acts or behaviours as suggested in the code as a form of sexual harassment?
4. How do employees cope when they are victims of sexual harassment?

Following upon the heels of the above said research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows: -

1. To examine the extent to which the suggested acts or behaviours in the code are perceived as a form of sexual harassment by employees.
2. To identify the factors that influence employees' perception of suggested acts or behaviours in the code as sexually harassing.
3. To determine whether type of harasser and gender of harasser would influence employees' perception of suggested acts or behaviours in the code as sexually harassing.
4. To discover the type of coping strategy employees would adopt upon being victims of sexual harassment.

The findings from this study would shed light on whether the acts or behaviours suggested in the code as possible forms of sexual harassment are appropriate given the conditions of the local working environment. In addition, it could be used to gauge whether employees from different levels of the organizations would perceive those suggested acts or behaviours in the same way. Lastly, factors that could influence employees' perception of the suggested acts or behaviours in the code as sexually harassing would be determined. The information gleaned from this study may assist human resource practitioners in forming appropriate training and awareness programs for the effective implementation of the code.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be categorized into *quid pro quo* and *non quid pro quo* forms of harassment (Gallagher, 1994; Frazier, Cochran & Olson, 1995; Adams, Kottke & Padgitt, 1983; Terpestra & Baker, 1987). *Quid pro quo* harassment refers to acts or behaviours in which sexual conduct becomes a condition of employment. Acts or behaviours, which do not make sexual conduct a condition of employment, fall into the second category if they unreasonably interfere with work performance and create an offensive work environment.

The code defines sexual harassment as any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature having the effect of verbal, non verbal, visual, psychological or physical harassment which must fulfill one of the following criteria: (i) on reasonable grounds might be perceived by the recipient as placing a condition of a sexual nature on his/her employment; or (ii) on reasonable grounds might be perceived by the recipient as an offence or humiliation, or a threat to his/her well being, but has no direct link to his/her employment. Acts or behaviours that meet the first criterion are categorized as sexual coercion; and if they fulfill the terms of the second criterion, they are categorized as sexual annoyance. The former in essence refers to *quid pro quo* forms of harassment whereas the latter refers to *non quid pro quo* forms of harassment. The definition also covers inappropriate acts or behaviours that occur outside the work premise provided it is work related. The code's definition of sexual harassment appears to reflect the definition coined by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (hereinafter referred to as EEOC) in the United States.

Although definitions for the term sexual harassment given by the EEOC or the code bear similarity, difficulty still exists in accounting for what individuals perceive as sexual harassment or otherwise (Gutek & O'Connor, 1995; Gutek, Nakamura, Gahart, Handschumacher & Russell, 1980). Keyton and Rhodes (1997) argued that the EEOC definition of sexual harassment did not specify behaviours, which were sexually harassing but only explained the effect of sexual harassment. The code does specify to a certain extent the specific behaviours that could be perceived as sexually harassing although those behaviours are neither conclusive nor exhaustive. As a result, employees remain uncertain of types of social-sexual behaviour that could constitute sexual harassment. Wan Azhari (1996) in a local based study of female respondents from the manufacturing sector found that their perception of certain acts or behaviours as sexually harassing was influenced by demographic factors such as age, race, salary group, education level and position in the company.

Keyton and Rhodes (1997) in their study stressed the importance of clearing the ambiguity pertaining to unacceptable social-sexual behaviour. Improved understanding in this area would assist an organization to write an effective policy statement and develop better education and training programs to help employees recognize what is sexual harassment and avoid falling into the trap of innocent behaviour misconstrued as sexual harassment.

2.2 Rationalization of Sexual Harassment Based on Models and Theories

Models and theories related to sexual harassment have been formulated. Tangri, Burt & Johnson (1982) had identified three models pertaining to sexuality at work: the Natural-Biological Model, the Organizational Model and the Social-Cultural Model. The Natural-Biological model theorizes that sexual harassment and other

forms of sexual expression at work are simply manifestations of natural attraction between two people. It is devoid of either harm or intention to harass; and is neither sexist nor discriminatory.

The Organizational Model assumes that sexual harassment is a product of the opportunity structure stemming from the organizational hierarchy. The individual in power will use their authority to coerce their subordinates into accepting the role of a sex object or engaging in sexual interactions. The power-based theory supports the incidence of sexual harassment between the supervisor and subordinate.

The Social-Cultural Model rationalizes sexual harassment as a mechanism for maintaining male dominance over women in the workplace and society. Male dominance is maintained by patterns of male-female interaction to further reaffirm the male dominance in economic and political matters. Males are recognized by the society for being assertive and aggressive in their sexual behaviour. Society rewards women for being acquiescent, compliant and passive. The Social-Cultural model could explain incidences of sexual harassment in the local environment owing to the existence of a patriarchal culture in which the males' dominance over the female is asserted and accepted. However, local studies or findings are not available to support this rationalization for sexual harassment.

Tangri et al. (1982) concluded that none of the three models could stand alone in offering an adequate explanation for sexual harassment. Other sexual harassment researchers, Gutek & Morasch (1982) have combined some characteristic from the three models introduced by Tangri et al. (1982), in order to formulate a model known

as Sex Role Spill Over Model. The Sex Role Spill Over Model indicates that a woman is expected to be a sex object or to project her sexuality through her behaviour, personal appearance or the way she dresses herself. In addition, a woman would be expected to be more loyal than a man would in her position. Thus, sex role spill over also occurs when a woman is in the role of a helper, for instance as secretary or personal assistant, without career progress towards the supervisory or managerial level. Gutek and Morasch (1982) have substantiated and supported this model with survey data from a study about sexual harassment of workingwomen in the Los Angeles County.

2.3 Factors that Affect Perception of Sexual Harassment

Gender, a sexualized work environment, exposure to the issue of sexual harassment, type of harasser are factors that influence whether particular acts or behaviour are perceived as sexual harassment.

Women tend to interpret even less severe behaviours as constituting sexual harassment (Collins & Blodgett, 1981; Fitzgerald & Omerod, 1991; Gutek & O'Connor, 1995; Sabitha, 1999) and they are inclined to consider that sexual harassment is a problem at their workplace (Collins & Blodgett, 1981). On the other hand, findings by Henry (1998) supported the fact that men had some uncertainty over what behaviours were appropriate when interacting with women to avoid the latter from misconstruing their behaviours as a form of sexual harassment. Past studies have also confirmed that respondents have a tendency to perceive an act or behaviour as amounting to sexual harassment when a supervisor was involved instead of a co-

worker or subordinates (Collins & Blodgett, 1981; Sabitha, 1999; Gutek, Morasch & Cohen, 1983).

Gutek (1985) in her study found that sexual harassment is more likely to occur in sexualized work environments which support flirtatious behaviour, dirty, "off color" or sexual jokes; and crude language to name a few. The employee who comes from a sexualized work environment will also react differently as compared to those who are not in the same environment. They will also have the fear of retaliation if they complain about sexual harassment type of behaviour (Sperry, 1999).

2.4 Coping Strategies against Sexual Harassment

Victims adopt various responses and coping strategies when they encounter sexual harassment at the workplace. The victims may choose to suffer in silence or just leave their employment as the final solution towards the issue. According to Henry (1998), almost half of the victims from the U.S Merit System Protection Board survey had indicated that they tried to ignore the behaviour or keep quiet. Gutek and Koss (1993) found that the most common strategies women used to deal with sexual harassment are indirect or silent responses such as avoiding the harasser, ignoring the incident or reinterpreting the event. These actions however are regarded as ineffective as compared to telling the harasser to stop. Other research conducted on coping strategies found that the female's response either positive or negative does affect the perception of men and women alike as to whether the act or behaviour was perceived as sexually harassing by the said female in question (Jones, Remland & Brunner, 1987). However, local data is unavailable to determine the types of coping strategies that would be adopted by victims of sexual harassment.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The variable of interest in this study, the dependent variable, is the perception of sexual harassment from the perspective of employees at the supervisory and managerial level regardless of gender. Based on the literature review a theoretical framework has been developed. The independent variables are as follows: sexualized workplace, exposure to the issue of sexual harassment and demographic factors. The relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable is depicted in a schematic diagram shown in Figure 3.1.

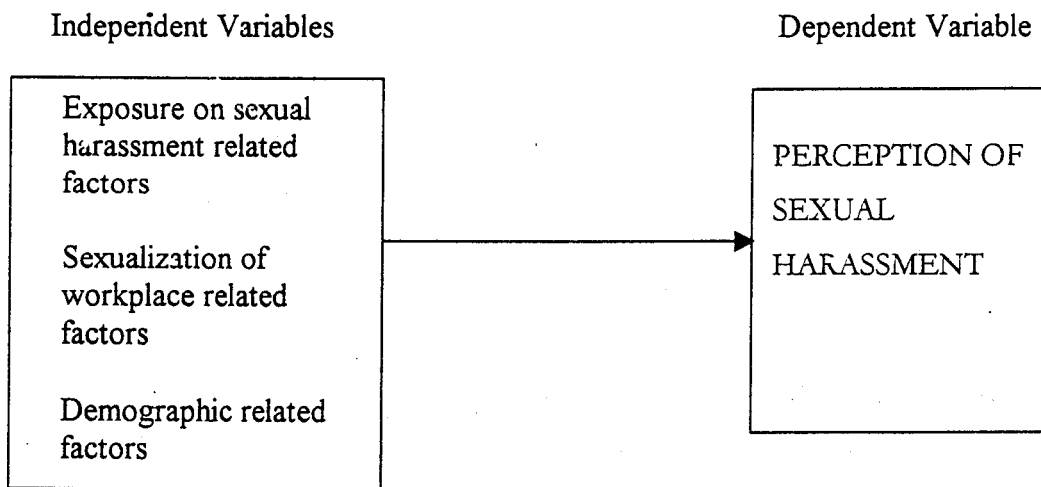


Figure 3.1 Theoretical Frameworks on Perception of Sexual Harassment

The above said model can be tested on the local framework among the local and multinational employees. Testing has been carried out to evaluate the validity of the hypotheses that can be generated from the above said relationship. The result will shed some lights on the current perception of sexual harassment among local employees at managerial and supervisory level.

3.2 Hypotheses

Based upon the relationship of the variables in the previous section, the following hypotheses were developed and tested to achieve the study's first and second objective. No hypotheses were generated to test the third and forth objectives as they were more in the nature of an exploratory survey to understand whether type of harasser and gender of harasser would affect perception; and as to the type of coping strategies that would be adopted in general in the face of sexual harassment.

Sperry (1999) and Gutek (1985) found that sexualization of the workplace had an effect on perception of sexual harassment. Employee will perceive socio sexual behaviour as acceptable manners because in a highly sexualized workplace, that kind of acts or behaviour is not considered as harassing others. Hence, it was postulated that:

H1: Employees who work in a highly sexualized work environment, would perceive less acts or behaviours as a form of sexual harassment

Exposure to issues pertaining to sexual harassment was also perceived to have an effect on the perception of sexual harassment among employees. Employee with more exposure on sexual harassment information would have higher understanding what kind of behaviours or acts that are considered a form of sexual harassment. Hence, it was postulated that:

H2: Employees who were more exposed to issues pertaining to sexual harassment would perceive more acts or behaviours as a form of sexual harassment.

Sabitha (1999) and Wan Azhari (1996) found significant relationships between demographic data such as age, salary group and position in the company to the perception of sexual harassment. Past research also shows that women tend to interpret less severe behaviour as sexual harassment (Collins & Blodgett, 1981; Fitzgerald & Omerod, 1991; Gutek & O'Connor, 1995). Hence, the following postulations were made:

H3: Females perceive less severe acts or behaviours as forms of sexual harassment compared to males.

Wan Azhari (1996) in his study found that age, salary, education and position in the company were important factors as predictor of sexual harassment in several situations or behaviours. Thus, hypotheses on demographic factors and will be included in this study.

H4: There is a positive relationship between demographic factors (namely, age, race, marital status, education level, gender, sector, department, salary group, position, duration in the company and religion) of the employees to their perception of sexual harassment

Lastly, hypothesis on relationship between independent variables to perception of sexual harassment has been included as the following:

H5: There is a positive relationship between independent variables (exposure on sexual harassment and sexualized workplace) to perception of sexual harassment.

3.3 Construct

The independent variable of this study is perception of sexual harassment. The independent variables of this study are exposure on sexual harassment information, sexualization of workplace and demographic variables.

3.3.1 Dependent Variable: Perception of Sexual Harassment

The perceptions on sexual harassment were measured as overall score and via five dimensions, which are verbal harassment, non-verbal or gesture harassment, visual harassment, psychological harassment and physical harassment. The items for measuring the sexual harassment dimension denoted VSH1 to VSH17 (Verbal Dimension), GSH1 to GSH4 (Non Verbal or Gesture Harassment), VLSH1 to VLSH5 (Visual dimension), PYSH1 to PYSH4 (Psychology dimension) and PCSH1 to PCSH9 (Physical Dimension). Table 3.1 explains the social sexual behaviour, which constitutes each dimension.

Table 3.1 Summaries of Variable Codes for each Sexual Harassment Dimension

	Social Sexual Behaviour	Code
1.	Menyentuh bahagian-bahagian badan yang sulit	PCSH1
2.	Menyentuh bahagian-bahagian badan yang tak sulit seperti tangan	PCSH2
3.	Menepuk	PSCH3
4.	Ciuman	PSCH4
5.	Pelukan	PSCH5
6.	Mencubit	PSCH6
7.	Menggesel badan anda	PSCH7
8.	Berdiri terlalu rapat sehingga merasa tidak selesa	PSCH8
9.	Berkelakuan seolah-olah sudah "kenal sangat"	GSH1
10.	Teguran serta penampilan seseorang atau menyarankan anda bertukar wajah supaya anda kelihatan lebih cantik/segak	VSH1
11.	Tekanan untuk perjumpaan sosial yang tidak rasmi seperti jemputan untuk minum, makan dan lain-lain pertemuan sosial	PYSH1
12.	Meminta agar balik lewat atau kerja lewat untuk bekerja bersama-sama walaupun tiada kerja yang hendak di buat	PYSH2

	Social Sexual Behaviour (continued)	Code
13.	Memberi cenderahati yang berunsur intim seperti baju tidur, pakaian dalam dan barangan sepertinya	PYSH3
14.	Memerhati, merenung serta memandang dengan kadar yang keterlaluan	GSH2
15.	Merenung, melerek yang berunsur lucah	GSH3
16.	Gurau senda, cerita, bahasa yang berbentuk lucah	VSH2
17.	Bahan-bahan berbentuk lucah yang dilakukan melalui tampalan, pameran, edaran, gambar, cerita atau kartun	VLSH1
18.	Kata-kata berunsur lucah mengenai pakaian	VSH3
19.	Kata-kata berunsur lucah mengenai tubuh badan (contoh solid-molid, bergetah dan lain-lain)	VSH4
20.	Menuntut habuan seksual secara desakan atau ancaman	VSH5
21.	Membayangkan atau menjanjikan hadiah atau layanan yang baik jika memberi kerjasama berunsur seks	VSH6
22.	Menerima surat yang berunsur lucah	VLSH3
23.	Menerima panggilan telefon yang berunsur lucah	VSH7
24.	Bersiul atau membuat riuh yang berunsur lucah	GSH4
25.	Paparan gambar, tulisan, permainan dalam komputer yang berunsur lucah	VLSH4
26.	Individu yang berpakaian dengan cara yang tidak mengikut kod pakaian biasa atau berpakaian menjolok mata atau tidak mengikut kelaziman tempat kerja anda	VLSH5
27.	Membuat rujukan pada gaya hidup seksual anda dan hal peribadi anda	VSH8
28.	Cuba memaksa secara fizikal untuk melakukan hubungan seks dengan anda	PSCH9
29.	Cuba memaksa anda secara lisan untuk melakukan hubungan seks	VSH9
30.	Membuat isyarat berunsur seks	GSH5
31.	Bergurau atau berbicara tentang wanita yang kurang senang bagi wanita	VSH10
32.	Bergurau atau berbicara tentang lelaki yang kurang senang untuk wanita	VSH11
33.	Mengeluarkan kata kata yang berunsur seksual tentang diri mereka kepada anda	VSH12
34.	Menyebarkan khabar-khabar angin yang berunsur seksual mengenai anda kepada orang lain	VSH13
35.	Terpaksa bertindak secara positif terhadap pelawaan seks atau sosial untuk mendapat perhatian yang baik di tempat kerja	PYSH5
36.	Menjadi sasaran terhadap kiasan seks	VSH14
37.	Menggunakan perkataan yang berbau seksual seperti "darling" atau "sayang" atau "seksi" semasa kerja	VSH15
38.	Seorang pekerja mendakwa bahawa anda mendapat kenaikan gaji, pangkat atau jawatan yang lebih baik kerana anda mempunyai hubungan yang intim dengan boss	VSH16
39.	Seorang pekerja memberi komen mengenai maruah diri anda kepada orang lain	VSH17

3.3.2 Independent Variables: Exposure on Sexual Harassment Information, Sexualization of Workplace and Demographic Variables

Exposure to sexual harassment information is measured based overall score for each item listed under Section II in the questionnaire. The exposure to sexual harassment variable includes familiarity with the sexual harassment terminology, availability of company policy or directives related to sexual harassment, availability of grievance procedures in the company where the respondent is currently employed, participation in internal or external training program on sexual harassment and awareness of the code's existence. Apart from the exposure score, the source of information and satisfaction from sexual harassment related training program were included in the Section II in the questionnaire. The additional information on source of information would be helpful to explore most popular source of information on sexual harassment among the respondents.

Sexualization of workplace is the level of sexualized working environment in where respondent is currently employed. The statement listed in the questionnaire was used to measure the occurrences of socio sexual behaviour such as crude or dirty jokes and pressure to flirt among employees in the company where respondent is currently employed.

Demographic variables included in this study included race, gender, religion, age, position a company, length of service, sector and type of company, department where the respondent is currently employed, salary, marital status and education level. The twelve specific demographic data were identified based on past literatures findings.

3.4 Sampling Design

This section will address that part of the design process, which includes the definition of the population, the sample size and the sampling technique used for the study.

3.4.1 Population of the Study

The study population consists of all employees at the managerial and supervisory level who work in all types of business enterprises mainly in Penang and Kedah. The unit of analysis for this study was the employee at either the managerial or the supervisory level. The study was cross-sectional and data gathered once over a period of one month.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A sample of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents from the managerial and supervisory level participated in the study. Convenience sampling was used to select the samples for the study. A total of one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed through personal contact in both manufacturing and non manufacturing companies based in Penang and Kedah. Another fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed electronically through personal contacts and no restriction set on the location of respondent as long as they are locally based. Although convenience sampling has less generalizability as compared to other types of sampling (Sekaran, 2000), the respondents were not hand picked or chosen directly for the study.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Two ways of data collection method were used in this study. The researcher has personally walk through the content of the questionnaire to her personal contacts who

are mostly Human Resource personnel, to ensure that they fully understood and able to assist the respondents in completing the questionnaires. They distributed the questionnaires to the respondents in the companies where they are employed and later collected the responses on behalf of the researcher. The second method is via e-mail. Respondents received their questionnaires and revert the completed questionnaires to the researcher within a week. The questionnaire used is as in Appendix I.

3.6 Questionnaire Design

It consists of five sections. Section I focused on the collection of demographic data of the respondents. It consisted of twelve questions. These variables helped in describing the sample's characteristics. More importantly, they proved valuable in determining whether demographic factors influence perception of sexual harassment. Section II comprised of ten questions. Six out of those ten questions numbered from one until six were items to measure exposure to issues pertaining to sexual harassment. Section III was made up of statements of acts or behaviours for measuring whether the respondents would perceive them as sexual harassment. This section utilized the Utara Sexual Harassment Perception Questionnaire (hereinafter referred to as USHPQ), which is reported as having its reliability alpha at 0.9446. According to Sabitha Marican, who originated the instrument, the USHPQ tools had been tested with many focus groups and consideration of the local culture has been built into it. Written permission from the originator of the said tool was obtained before the USHPQ was administered in this study. The original questionnaire was expanded by including three main columns and six sub-columns for the purposes of determining whether type of harasser and gender of harasser would influence perception of sexual harassment. The questionnaire maintained with dichotomous (Yes/No) format, which is consistent with previous instrument developed by Gutek

(1985) and Wan Azhari (1996) studies. Section IV consisted of three items to measure the extent to which the workplace was sexualized. Section V contained nine items to measure the type of coping strategy that would be adopted. Three out of the nine items measure the passive type of coping strategy (Item 1, 2 and 9). The remaining items measure the active type of coping strategy.

3.6.1 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability is very important to evaluate the goodness of the measure. Since USPHQ instrument has been tested earlier, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is computed to measure other item such as sexualization of the workplace and coping strategies.

3.6.2 Pre-test

The questionnaire was pre-tested for reliability and understanding. Five respondents were selected and interviewed. Along the process, feedbacks were gathered to understand the weaknesses and ambiguities in the questionnaire. Minor adjustments were made to the questionnaire in order to increase the usability of the questionnaire. Questionnaire is maintained in Bahasa Malaysia version after considering the fact that the respondents are local employees and will come from minimum SPM and above level of education. The original USHPQ instrument has the English version, however, the copy of translated version were not obtained due to time constraint. The USHPQ instrument was not translated to English in order to avoid differences from the original version.

3.7 Questionnaire Administration

A network of contacts from business enterprises in Penang and Kedah were requested to distribute and collect the questionnaires. A total of one hundred (100) respondents received their questionnaires in hardcopies and another fifty (50) respondents received their questionnaires in soft copies via e mail. The respondents were given sufficient time of one week to complete and return the questionnaires either via electronic mail or hardcopy.

3.8 Data Analysis

The systematic data analysis approach suggested by Sekaran (2000) is adhered strictly to ensure testability of the study particularly for the research hypotheses. The processes involved were preparing data for analysis, handling of blank responses, statistical analysis and hypotheses testing. All returned questionnaires were validated to ensure they are fit for processing. Coding was done before data entry process to the SPSS software. The blank responses were handled by identifying the extent of blank responses in the questionnaires. Data analysis completed using SPSS software package. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, means, and standard deviations performed. The frequency distribution with visual displays of histogram helps to understand the dispersion and central tendency as well as to acquire the feel of the demographic data. Similarly, the pattern analysis was used to identify the pattern of exposure to sexual harassment related factors, overall score for perception of sexual harassment and type of sexual harassment dimension data.

The reliability and inferential statistics were performed to test the goodness of the data. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the dependent and independent variables in this study. For demographic variables, inferential statistics

such as ⁱIndependent T-test and One Way ANOVA test were performed. Both tests were used to test any significant difference between the demographic variables and the dependent variable. Multiple regression tests ^{were} also performed to evaluate any significant and direct relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable

RESULTS

4.1 Sample Profile

Ninety four (94) questionnaires returned from the total target of one hundred and fifty (150), which, make up sixty three percent (63%) return rate. All questionnaires were reviewed for validity before further data preparation for analysis. Nine questionnaires were rejected due to too many blank responses and difficulty to read the responses. The breakdown of returned questionnaires according to demographic variables is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The Sample Profile

Demographics Variables	Categories	Volume	Sample %
Age	Between 20 to 30 years	39	45.9
	Between 30 to 40 years	35	41.2
	Above 40 years	11	12.9
Race	Malay	61	71.8
	Indian	14	16.5
	Chinese	10	11.8
Company	Multinational (American)	14	16.5
	Multinational (Europe)	7	8.2
	Multinational (Japan)	18	21.2
	Local	46	54.1
Marital Status	Single	32	37.6
	Married	53	62.4
Salary	Below RM1,000	1	1.2
	RM1,000 to RM2,000	24	28.2
	RM2,000 to RM3,000	28	32.9
	RM3,000 to RM4,000	19	22.4
	Above RM4,000	13	15.3
Religion	Islam	63	74.1
	Hinduism	10	11.8
	Buddhism	10	11.8
	Christian	1	1.2
	Others	1	1.2

Demographics Variables (Continued)	Categories	Volume	Sample %
Education	SPM	8	9.4
	STPM	6	7.1
	Diploma	18	21.2
	First Degree (BA/BSc)	44	51.8
	Postgraduate (MBA/MSc)	9	10.6
	Doctorate (Phd)	85	0
Gender	Male	48	56.5
	Female	37	43.5
Position	Manager and above	16	18.8
	Officer/Executive	57	67.1
	Supervisor	12	14.1
Sector	Production/Manufacturing	57	67.1
	Petroleum and Gas	2	2.4
	Stock broking	2	2.4
	Construction and development	1	1.2
	Banking	2	2.4
	Education	4	4.7
	Healthcare	4	4.7
	Services and hospitality	3	3.5
	Accounting	1	1.2
	Others	9	10.6
Department	Operation	20	23.5
	Project Management	2	2.4
	Quality and reliability	4	4.7
	Planning/Material	1	1.2
	Sales and Marketing	4	4.7
	Personnel/Human Resource	21	24.7
	Purchasing	1	1.2
	Engineering	13	15.3
	Finance	10	11.8
	Others	9	10.6
Length of service	Below 1 year	17	20
	1 year to 2 years	13	15.3
	2 years to 3 years	14	16.5
	3 years to 4 years	12	14.1
	4 years to 5 years	28	32.9
	Above 5 years	1	1.2

Based on Table 4.1, there is insufficient sample size in some of the categories, which may influence the validity of statistical analysis between dependent and independent variables. Hence, the sample of profile is re-categorize to reflect a better consolidation in the demographic data. All data were re-categorized except for gender, race and marital status. All re-categorized data is labeled with additional recode text. The sample profile after re-categorization was tabulated as per Table 4.2 based on SPSS output as illustrated in Appendix III.

Table 4.2 The Sample Profile after Re-categorization.

Demographics Variables	Categories	Volume	Sample %
Age	Below 30 years	39	45.9
	Above 30 years	46	54.1
Race	Malay	61	71.8
	Indian	14	16.5
	Chinese	10	11.8
Company	Multinational	39	45.9
	Malaysian	46	54.1
Marital Status	Single	32	37.6
	Married	53	62.4
Salary	Below RM1,000	1	1.2
	RM1,000 to RM2,000	24	28.2
	Above RM2,000	28	70.6
Religion	Islam	63	74.1
	Others	22	25.9
Education	Non degree holder (SPM/STPM/Diploma)	32	37.6
	Degree holder (Bachelor/Master/Phd)	53	62.4
Gender	Male	48	56.5
	Female	37	43.5
Position	Managerial (Managers and above)	16	18.8
	Non Managerial (Executive/Officers/Supervisors)	69	81.2
Sector	Manufacturing	57	67.1
	Non Manufacturing	28	32.9
Department	Operation(Production/Quality Reliability/Engineering/Project Management)	39	45.9
	Personnel/Human Resource	21	24.7
	Sales&Marketing/Purchasing/Finance	25	29.4

Demographics Variables (Continued)	Categories	Volume	Sample %
Length of service	Below 2 years	30	35.3
	Between 2 years to 4 years	15	17.6
	Above 4 years	40	47.1

4.2 Exposure to Sexual Harassment information

Table 4.3 shows that 89.4% of the respondents are familiar with sexual harassment terminology although most of them have not attended any training program related to sexual harassment in their companies or outside their companies. Only 14.1% of the respondents have attended training program in their companies or outside their companies. This result is influenced by the absence of policy, directives or memo and grievance procedure for sexual harassment in most companies as depicted in Table 4.3.

On the other hand, more than half of the respondent (56.5%) reported that they are aware of the existence of Code of Practice on The Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. The positive result could be influenced by the extensive publicity given to the sexual harassment issue at work place by the media when data collection was being carried out.

The result on exposure to sexual harassment issue or topic has shown tremendous improvement overall as compared to findings by Wan Azhari (1996). The availability of policy, directives, guidelines or memo on sexual harassment increased from 6.9% to 24.7%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who attended internal training program related to sexual harassment increased from 0.8% to 14.1%. However, only 17.7 % of respondents of this study indicated that the internal training program related to sexual harassment were effective and very effective (Table 4.6).